CONTENTS

Components of a Literature Review ................................................................. 3
Purpose of a Literature Review ........................................................................ 3
Writing a Literature Review ........................................................................... 5
Facilitation Arrangements ............................................................................. 7
Submission of the Literature Review .............................................................. 8
Example 1: A Literature Review Plan ............................................................ 9
Presentation of a Literature Review ............................................................. 10
Submission Guidelines .................................................................................. 13

Acknowledgements

These guidelines have been prepared with the help and assistance of lecturers from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin and associate lecturers from linked hospitals who compiled the original Literature Review Guidelines for the Diploma in Nursing/ Midwifery.

© School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Dublin, Trinity College September 2011
**Components of a Literature Review**

1. Submission sheet
2. Title page
3. Acknowledgements
4. Declaration
5. Abstract
6. Table of contents
7. Introduction
8. Main sections – Headings/Subheadings
9. Conclusion
10. Reference List
11. Appendices

**Purpose of a Literature Review**

The purpose of a literature review is to:

1. Enable the student to develop skills to search, read, interpret and summarize the literature on a particular subject.

2. Enable the student to select a topic; the focus of the topic should be related to a nursing/midwifery issue.

3. Determine what is known and not known about a subject, concept or problem in the area of nursing/midwifery

4. Determine gaps, consistencies and inconsistencies in the literature about a subject, concept or problem.

5. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of designs, methods of inquiry and instruments used in earlier works.

6. Discover conceptual traditions used to examine problems.
7. Generate useful research questions/projects/activities for the discipline.

8. Determine an appropriate research design to answer the research question.

9. Determine the need for replication of a well-designed study or refinement of a study.

10. Promote development of protocols and policies related to nursing practice.

11. Identify a new practice intervention, or provide evidence for changing a practice intervention.

12. Enable the student to develop a research question and/or provide discussion on the relevance of the literature review findings to nursing/midwifery practice in the Irish context.
Writing a Literature Review

The literature review must focus on a Nursing or Midwifery issue or have a Nursing or Midwifery focus.

Step 1 Identify Area of Interest

- Stop and think.
- Pick an area that is of interest to you.
- Play around with an idea, rephrase it and try to focus your thoughts into a more specific review question.
- Identify key words that can be used for the literature search.
- The topic should be sufficiently complex to merit rigorous enquiry, but narrow enough to yield clear guidelines for practice.

Step 2 Planning a Time Scale

- The time taken should not be underestimated.
- Include commitments not connected with work, other study demands and domestic responsibilities.
- Plan a proposed timetable.
- The time scale should be realistic and achievable, making allowances for delays such as, difficulty locating important references.

Step 3 Literature Search

- Having defined your question and narrowed down the area of interest, head to the library.
- It is of benefit to have narrowed down your area at this stage to minimise the amount of information to sort through.
- Identify the scope of the literature search in terms of the dates of publication and countries of origin.

Types of Literature to Include

- Research studies are central to a literature review and should be critiqued appropriately.
- The subject may also appear in the literature as debate or description and the reviewer must make an informed judgement about what to include.
- A review should reflect and comment upon the type of literature available i.e. anecdotal / empirical.
- Include literature from other disciplines if appropriate.

How to Use Data Sources

- Hand search of printed bibliographies.
Search using a database such as CINAHL/ PROQUEST, Medline and Psychlit, Cochrane
The Internet is another option when searching for information – use reputable sites, i.e. PUBMED, OVID, Google Scholar
Books may give comprehensive accounts of a subject.
Journals tend to provide more recent data.
Use libraries such as Trinity College, Irish Nurses’ Organisation and Hospital Libraries.

Pointers for Use

Scan-reading the references as the search progresses is useful, once one keeps the original purpose in mind. This can highlight additional or alternative key words.
It also broadens the scope of the search and enables seminal work to be identified.
Read the abstracts to establish if the article meets your requirements.
Identify and earmark relevant articles.
After this first search sit down and read these articles.
Skim them at first to get a flavour of what they are about.
Then read them in-depth, critically.
Arrange articles into categories and subcategories.
Each category/subcategory becomes a chapter/subheading.

Step 4 Conclusions from Materials Read

Having brought information from various sources together, you need to conclude and summarise what has been read.
A consensus between writers may become apparent or disagreement may be obvious.
Try to draw comments and findings together and make statements about what you have found.
Identify what further work may be required in order to take things forward and make suggestions as to how your findings can be taken into practice areas.

Step 5 Preparing Drafts

Early drafts of the final presentation allow the student to think further about the data as a means of developing the issues, which arise from the review.
Writing a draft as soon as possible is recommended because it helps define ideas and develop arguments and conclusions.
Proof reading is essential. Ask someone else to check for spelling and grammatical errors and to establish the clarity of the material. Final responsibility for the work however lies with the student who submits the work.
Facilitation Arrangements

Each group of students will be allocated a named facilitator early into the year. The facilitator where possible will be a lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

Once the student has received a named facilitator they should begin to think about the area/topic that they intend to review.

Role of Literature Review Facilitator

The role of the facilitator is to assist you in the development of your literature review when the plan is submitted. This may include assistance and advice regarding the choice of topic and selection of appropriate literature. Writing the review is the responsibility of the student. The facilitator may give feedback on writing skills as appropriate. However, it is the role of the facilitator to read and comment on the first plan of the literature review only.

A sample format for the plan is provided in Example 1. This is an example and students should not feel constrained by it. The plan must meet the following criteria:

- One A4 page
- Produced in Microsoft Word format
- Topic to be reviewed must be identified
- Brief search history to identify databases / books searched
- Attempt to identify potential headings and subheadings
- In order to enable your facilitator to comment on your writing and critiquing skills you need to include a paragraph of no more than 500 words.
- The paragraph should focus on one aspect of the review and include the critique and summary of relevant aspects of at least two reports.

The plan must be submitted by e-mail to your facilitator by Monday 13th February, 2012, before 4pm.

Plans submitted after the due date and time will not be reviewed.
Feedback

Each student will normally receive feedback via e-mail from his or her facilitator within a period of three weeks from the date the plan was submitted. A one hour thirty minutes (1.5 hours) group facilitation session will be provided that all group members are advised to attend. Any queries you may have about your plan should be addressed at the group supervision session.

Each group of students needs to do the following:
- identify suitable dates and times for a group supervision meeting with their supervisor;
- one member of the group must then negotiate one of these dates, the time and venue with their supervisor.
- the meeting should occur following feedback on the plans submitted.

N.B. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH STUDENT TO ENSURE THAT THEY ATTEND THIS SESSION.

Submission of the Literature Review

Submission date is Monday 16th April, 2012, before 4pm.

All literature reviews should be submitted in accordance with School regulations and on the appointed date for individual courses.

Please refer to the School Handbook regarding submission of assignments.

Queries about the process of facilitation should be addressed to your course co-ordinator and not your literature review facilitator.
Example 1: A Literature Review Plan

**Topic of Choice:** Compliance in Adolescent Diabetes

**Search History:** I have tried searching CINHAL/PROQUEST Medline, Psychlit, and library indexes. I have also tried e-mailing current authors.

**Search Words:** I have tried using the following words and phrases: compliance, adherence, diabetes, adolescent and adolescent diabetes.

**Articles to Date:** So far I have managed to retrieve 20 research articles in this area and a number of anecdotal articles as well. Most appear to be quantitative although I have managed to secure a few qualitative articles as well.

**Headings:** The main headings that appear to be coming from the literature are:

- Compliance
- Compliance & measurement
- Education / Knowledge
- Parental support and discipline
- Support of nurse and physician
- Self perception
- Peer support
- Monitoring
- Treatment

**Paragraph:** Focus on one aspect of the review and include the critique and summary of relevant aspects of at least two sources.
Presentation of a Literature Review

Total Word Count (3000)

Abstract  (approximately 200 words – not included in word count)  (5% of mark)

- Summarise the content of your review and conclusion.
- You should leave this until the end of the review, as you need to have completed the review before you can summarise it.
- It gives the reader an immediate idea of what the review is about.

Introduction (500 words)  (10% of mark)

- Introduce your topic with reference to the literature / research and state if your chosen topic is an area that has been widely researched or not. The literature review is to focus on a nursing issue or have a nursing focus on your chosen topic.
- State the purpose: for example, this literature review is to.
- Provide a rationale for choosing this topic.
- Identify how you went about gathering information, i.e. manual search and use of databases.
- Identify the origin of articles selected and the type of research design e.g. descriptive / experimental research design studies.
- Identify dates, i.e. last ten years.
- Identify search or key words used.

Main Body of Literature Review  (2,000 words)  (60% of mark)

Here are Some Guidelines as to How to Structure this Section:

- Define any terms that may be ambiguous within the text.
- Provide headings for the main themes. You will be guided from the literature that you have read as to the areas of interest you should focus on. The themes should reflect the recurring ideas that have emerged from the literature.
- Critically review the relevant literature under each theme.
- Outline briefly what you are going to focus on in each theme.
- Provide a brief summary of the main points at the end of each theme before moving on to your next main heading.
- Remember to review the literature focusing on the primary purpose of the literature review.
- Anecdotal evidence should be used sparingly and clearly identified to the reader.
In Literature Reviews It is Appropriate to:

- Focus on the literature in detail to support the themes.
- Link different research studies to support your point. The following are two examples of how this may be achieved:
  - Further evidence to support such claims is provided by Blogg’s (1998) study, which claims that...
  - OR
    - These findings are consistent with research carried out by Bloggs (1998).
- Critique individual research studies. The following format is a suggestion as to what to include in a critique of literature:

1. Author (year).
2. Type of study i.e. quantitative/ qualitative
3. Design of the study i.e. survey, correlation, experimental etc.
4. Number of participants/subjects.
5. Type of sample i.e. random/convenient.
6. Setting where the study was carried out i.e. a large teaching hospital in Dublin Ireland.
7. Aim of the study.
8. Methods used to collect data i.e. questionnaire, interview, observations etc.
9. Some information on the type of themes focused on and/or assessment tools utilised to measure the investigating phenomenon.
10. Validity of these tools.
11. Findings – a summary of the pertinent findings only. Refrain from long descriptive accounts.
12. Some discussion to follow on the relevance/importance of the findings to the area under investigation:
   - What can be learned from this?
13. Strengths/weaknesses of the study build these into discussion as opposed to stating, “The strengths of this study are….” Link with another study if possible or introduce next theme.

It is important to include all these areas when reviewing research studies in detail. You do not have to stick rigidly to the sequencing of the first six points, i.e. you might like to commence with the author (year) and the aim of the study. Then progress to the type of study, number of participants, etc. All other sections should follow in the sequences outlined above.

Examples of literature reviews can be obtained from the following references:


The critical review of the literature must be followed by an overall conclusion.

**Conclusion (approximately 500 words) (15% of marks)**

- In your conclusion you may commence by stating the purpose of this literature review was to….
- Then provide a summary of all the different items that were discussed.
- Remember you are recapping on the main points of your review so you do not introduce any new research/themes.
- You can however make suggestions for further research to be carried out into certain aspects of your chosen topic.
- Finish off with an overall concluding statement.
- Students are encouraged to be creative as this is only a guide.

**In Literature Reviews it is Not Appropriate to:**

- State your own opinions on the subject (unless you have evidence to support such claims).
- State what you think nurses should do (unless you have evidence to support such claims).
- Provide long descriptive accounts of your subject with no reference to research studies.
- Provide numerous definitions, signs/symptoms, treatment and complications of a particular illness without focusing on research studies to provide evidence and the primary purpose of the literature review.
- Discuss research studies in isolation from each other.
Submission Guidelines

Referencing

- The Harvard system of referencing, as adapted for use by the School of Nursing and Midwifery 2011-2012, and as per School Handbook must be adhered to.
- Minimum 15 references

Layout of the Assignment

- Please see Regulations in School Handbook regarding Submission of Written Assignments.

Marking: Academic Presentation:

It is expected that students will use a fluent writing style demonstrating clarity of thought with accurate grammar and spelling.

Students are also expected to adhere to the conventions of academic writing including use of the Harvard Referencing Guide, as adapted for use by the School of Nursing and Midwifery 2011-2012.

(10% of mark)

Summary of Marks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Review</th>
<th>% of Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Body</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References